

**WILLIAMSBURG PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
2005 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORK SESSION #26
Monday, May 9, 2005**

A work session of the Williamsburg Planning Commission was held on Monday, May 9, 2005, at 7:00 p.m., in Conference Room 3A, Williamsburg Municipal Building, 401 Lafayette Street.

ATTENDANCE AND CALL TO ORDER

Present were Commissioners Young, Pons, Hertzler, McBeth and Rose. Absent were Commissioners Friend, Rose and Smith. Also present were Planning Director Nester and Zoning Administrator Murphy.

Mr. Young called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

OPEN FORUM

Mr. Young introduced two student representatives from the College: Jett Nelson, Secretary of Public Affairs for the Student Council, and Seth Levy. Both students said that they looked forward to being involved in the City's planning process.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Mr. Young announced that tonight's meeting would be a presentation from the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission on the *Population and Housing* and *Economy* reports that they have prepared for the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Nester said that these will become *Chapter 4 Population* and *Chapter 5 Economy*, and that the Housing information will be incorporated into *Chapter 8 Neighborhoods and Housing*.

Claire Jones and Eric Walberg presented their findings to the Commission, outlining the following major points.

- The Williamsburg Region more than doubled its population during the thirty-year period from 1970 to 2000.
- The 2000 Census reported a city population of 11,998, which is an increase of 5.2% over the 1990 Census population of 11,409.
- The City population is predominantly white (78%).
- Williamsburg is well-educated. Holders of bachelor's degrees account for 45% of the population, compared with 24% in Hampton Roads and 30% in Virginia.

- The college age group (ages 18-24) comprises 46% of the total population.
- There are 1,404 persons who are 65 or older living in the City, making up more than 21% of the City's non-student population of approximately 6,600.
- Single-family homes dominate the housing market in the Williamsburg region, ranging from 57% of the total housing stock in Williamsburg to 86% of the total housing stock in York County.
 - Mrs. McBeth suggested adjusting the housing stock to reflect housing built since the 2000 Census.
- According to the 2000 Census, Williamsburg has a total of 3,880 housing units of which 3,619 (93%) are occupied.
- The average size of households in Williamsburg is smaller than that of its suburban neighbors: 2.07 persons compared to 2.47 for James City County and 2.78 for York County.
- Most areas of the City are low-density, having 1-7 housing units per acre. Only two census blocks have a density greater than 14 units per acre.
- Williamsburg has the highest number of renters in its region, and more than Hampton Roads and the state as a whole.
 - It was suggested that the owner-occupancy figures be updated. Mr. Nester noted the difficulty of doing this since we can only estimate at this point.

Williamsburg Population & Housing Projections

- Based on HRPDC projections developed in 2004, the City's growth rate was expected to be 26% over the period from 2000 to 2030 (total population = 15,100).
- Based on the revised 2004 population estimate and recent development, the City now projects a significantly higher population growth rate, reaching a population of 16,600 by 2010 and 19,000 by 2030.
 - There was an extended discussion about the population projections, and how much population growth should be accommodated by the City. Mr. Nester reviewed his assumptions for the increased population growth based on known projects and the projected land use and zoning for vacant land in the City. Mr. Hertzler asked about comparisons with other cities to help us evaluate our situation. Mr. Rose noted the importance of dealing with infrastructure needs as the population grows, and noted that our low cost of living compared with the northeast has an effect on our growth.

- This means that the City's 32% population growth between 1970 and 2000 will increase to a projected growth of 58% over the period from 2000 to 2030.

Williamsburg Economic Highlights

- The City of Williamsburg is a leader in retail sales and tourist travel expenditures for its three-jurisdiction region.
 - Mr. Young asked about retail employment numbers versus employment growth – how do these relate to each other and what effect does the type of retail establishment have?
 - Mr. Pons questioned the use of the VTC figures for tourism. He stated that without additional background information, the numbers presented could not accurately depict Williamsburg's position in the marketplace. He suggested using Smith Travel Service figures, which provide a better picture of Williamsburg's tourism industry. He added that there are additional drivers that bring tourists to the area and they should be included in the document. He concluded by saying that Colonial Williamsburg is not quite the driver that it used to be and suggested the decline in attendance as evidence.
- Employment opportunities in the Williamsburg region are nearly evenly split between the City, James City County, and York County. A gradual shift toward employment centers in the counties is evident after 1990.
- Most new business or commercial development within Williamsburg is likely to take place on redeveloped land.
- The College of William and Mary is a major employer and its students account for nearly half the city's population.
 - Mrs. McBeth noted that the College is really the largest employer when Aramark is added to the College figures, and said that she could get additional information pertaining to the College. She suggested additional employment information from Colonial Williamsburg. Mr. Pons asked about the breakdown of the Colonial Williamsburg figures – how many employees involved in support services versus interpretative jobs.

Conclusions

- Williamsburg has the highest percentage of residents that are college-aged or 65 and over in its region.
- The City has more renters and multi-family housing than its region and Hampton Roads as a whole.

- The City is expected to see a marked increase in population over the next 30 years.
- The City will remain a leader in retail sales and employment, but will face more competition from surrounding counties.
- College students represent the most significant segment of underserved consumers in the City.

Mr. Young thanked Ms. Jones and Mr. Walberg for their work on the population and economy data. Mr. Nester said that the comments made tonight would be taken into consideration as the draft was finalized.

OPEN FORUM

Marie Wonsey, 521 Suri Drive, said that workers need places to live in the City, and suggested that efforts be made to create dwelling units above stores and offices. She also had questions about open space requirements for the City as a whole and for individual developments.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Jesse Young, Chairman
Williamsburg Planning Commission